

NSC BRIEFING

2 April 1958

BLOC ARMS AID TO ALGERIAN REBELS

I. To date the bloc has not been a significant direct source of arms for the Algerian rebels.

A. Although a few identifiable bloc arms have apparently been captured, French claims that the rebels receive substantial bloc aid have not been confirmed.

1. The preponderance of rebel arms are of Western make and were either captured in Algeria, obtained through Arab channels, or purchased throughout Europe.

II. This picture now seems to be changing.

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A. Last year the Czechs provided a \$1 million supply of small arms not easily identifiable as of bloc origin. This shipment was seized by Spanish authorities last June.

B. Now, for the first time, the bloc has apparently decided to extend massive arms aid to the Algerian rebels, who, in turn, seem ready to accept this aid. In the past, the rebels, while accepting some local and external Communist support, have seemed reluctant to seek major bloc assistance.

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III. These arms, if delivered, would significantly enhance the rebels' military potential.

A. Despite French efforts, the rebels are now better armed than ever. This would provide for a significant expansion of their 25,000 or B. The new equipment will enable them to expand their 25,000 to 30,000 man army, the size of which has heretofore been limited primarily by an arms shortage. There have apparently always been plenty of volunteers.

IV. This new deal may foreshadow a more determined Communist effort to make the rebellion militarily dependent on Communist support and to establish decisive influence over the rebel leadership.